

Express Mailing Label No. EL 842274461 US

PATENT APPLICATION
Docket No.: 8808.11

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

OF

CHET D. LINTON

FOR

**SYSTEM FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT**

KIRTON & McCONKIE
1800 Eagle Gate Tower
60 East South Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84041

BACKGROUND

1. Related Applications

This application claims priority to provisional patent application 60/229,206, filed August 31, 2000.

2. Field of Invention

This invention relates to a web-enabled system for teaching skills to participants, assisting participants in integrating and applying those skills to their vocation, assessing the success of participants in applying the skills, and evaluating whether or not additional training is necessary. More particularly, and by way of example only, the present system may be used in an educational setting. The present system may be used to train educational instructors based on federal or state teaching standards and to assist them in integrating their training into lesson plan designs. This system may operate by initially, providing a matrix that automatically conforms to standards set by the state or regional districts where the instructor teaches. Next, the instructors use the matrix to train. The system then enables the instructor to integrate the training into a lesson plan and ultimately, into classroom instruction. After the instructor teaches students based on the training received, students of the instructor may then be assessed using any of the standardized examinations. The data from these examinations assesses and analyzes students at all levels and at all demographics and may be forwarded to an administrator or supervisor of the instructor and used in the instructor's evaluation, either by a supervisor of the instructor, or simply by the instructor for his or her own self-assessment. If the assessment reveals students of the instructor are deficient in certain areas, this signals the instructor may need more training in those areas. The instructor may then participate in

additional development training, which begins the cycle anew. The present system may be used for training professionals in areas outside academia, such as for training professionals in sales, safety, or any other area that involves training and assessment as to the assimilation and effectiveness of that training.

3. **Background**

A majority of industries that require professional development have curriculums and standards outlining the objectives for instructors in those industries. Some industries even base instructors' salaries or continued employment on the evaluation and success of students within the instructors' purview. For instance, in an academic setting, if teachers fail to provide instruction at the level required by the federal, state or regional school required level, and their students demonstrate deficiencies in certain areas, the teachers' job or salary may be affected.

Unfortunately, despite federal, state or regionally mandated standards, there is not only little supervision of instructors to ensure they meet and implement such standards, but also there is little guidance available for instructors as to how to implement those standards.

Furthermore, there are many areas in which to train educators, in particular. For instance, training in leadership, interpersonal skills, discipline, communication skills, or even in the basic subject matters the educator instructs in is often a necessity for an educator to teach and convey lesson plans successfully. However, another drawback with respect to educator improvement results when school districts only focus on a single element for improvement of their instructors, because budgetary restraints preclude focusing on more than one area. This limits school districts in their ability to train or improve in more than one area. As a consequence, though necessity calls for

improvement in more than one area, school districts end up choosing one area, among many, for training their teachers even though a broad base of training is necessary.

Yet another drawback with current techniques of professional development occurs when administrators want instructors to focus on one area of professional development, while instructors, school members or the public desires development of instructors in another area. This fragmented approach to training may result in instructors receiving training in areas that instructors oftentimes feel are unnecessary or unproductive. Also, such a fragmented approach in training may not improve the quality of instruction to students, which is the ultimate goal.

Moreover, since many school districts do not correlate student assessment data or provide feedback to instructors based on the assessment data, it is difficult to determine whether or not the training results in any improvement in students' scores.

BRIEF SUMMARY AND OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore an object of some embodiments of the present invention to provide a training system to assist in the development of professionals in discrete areas of instruction. These areas of instruction may be those mandated by federal or state regulations or simply may be in areas where organizations feel their instructors or trainees need improvement.

Another object of some embodiments of the present invention is to provide a system for professional development where there is supervision of instructors to ensure they meet and implement federal, state or local standards.

Yet another object of some embodiments of the present invention is to provide a system for professional development where there is guidance available for instructors as to how to implement federal, state or local standards.

In order to briefly set forth the summary of the present invention, the implementation of the present invention in an academic environment is provided. The first step in some embodiments of the present invention is to provide development training for instructors within an academic environment, such as a school district. These professionals are trained by accessing, via the internet, audio or video presentations on topics of interest, such as leadership training, math skills, communication skills, English skills, and similar subjects of consequence and important to the professional development of educational instructors. These topics for professional development may also be dictated by federal or state governmental standards or by the school district itself.

Some embodiments of the present invention monitor the participation by the instructor in the training and may provide self-evaluation examinations so that the instructor may determine whether

or not the instruction has been integrated. The system provides that once a level of comprehension is attained, the instructor may then move to a matrix or template that assists the instructor in completing and designing instructional lesson plans. These lesson plans integrate the training the instructor just received. The ultimate purpose of the lesson plan matrix is to guide the instructor in creating instructional lesson plans that comply with standards set by the federal and state governments. Also integrated into the lesson plan design and the applied classroom instruction are the skills now learned by the instructor during the development training. Put another way, the professional development concepts and strategies all become part of the pedagogy.

After a period of time elapses, in which these newly trained skills are implemented and utilized, students under the purview of the instructor are given standardized examinations, such as CRT, SAT, or MAT. This assessment data derived from these tests is then analyzed at all levels of comprehension and then correlated with student demographics. This analysis is then provided to the instructor for instructor self-assessment or may be provided to the administrator for instructor review and advancement decisions. If the assessment reveals the training resulted in an improvement in student performance, then the school district or supervisor may provide refresher training, more complex training in that area, or may expand the training into additional areas of training, which are thought to be needed. If the assessment analysis demonstrates in specific areas of training there was no net improvement, then those areas may either be deleted from the training program, replaced with other standards shown to be successful, or more training may be made available.

Additionally, this information may be shared between school districts in a region so that successful concepts may be widely integrated.

These and other objects and features of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following description, drawing, and the appended claims. Other objects will likewise become apparent from the practice of the invention as set forth hereafter.

100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

In order that the manner in which the above-recited and other advantages and objects of the invention are obtained, a more particular description of the invention briefly described above will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments thereof, which are illustrated in the appended drawing. Understanding that this drawing depicts only typical embodiments of the invention and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope, the invention will be described with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawing in which:

Figure 1 is a flow chart showing the various segments of the improvement continuum integrating the system of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

It is emphasized that the present invention, as illustrated in the figure and description herein, can be embodied in other forms. Thus, neither the drawing nor the following more detailed description of the various embodiments of the system and method of the present invention limit the scope of the invention. The drawing and detailed description are merely representative of the particular embodiments of the invention; the substantive scope of the present invention is limited only by the appended claims. The various embodiments of the invention will best be understood by reference to the drawing, wherein like elements are designated by like alphanumeric characters throughout.

Referring now to Figure 1, professional development training 10 is provided comprising a combination of live, on-line, and video presentations directed to specific areas of improvement. In an educational context, these areas of improvement may correspond to standards set forth by a school district or a group of parents, such as the Parent Teacher Association. In a broader context, the areas of improvement may be aimed at and correspond with standards set forth by the private entity providing the training, or, if a public entity, by the federal or state government.

As set forth in an academic setting, this professional development training 10 may also be accessed through parent programs 12, in which parents may monitor the training being provided instructors and may offer feedback on areas where parents believe further training is required. The parents may also participate themselves in the programs so that they may support the instructors and supplement the instruction being offered their children.

Further, college students pursuing education degrees, graduates of education, and masters' students preparing to be educational instructors may also go through program 14, where they receive

professional development training either for the purpose to improve the likelihood of being hired by a school district, because their training is customized to conform with that particular school districts standards and style, or because the school district also mandate a potential applicant instructor undergo such training before the instructor is considered for the job and hired.

After an instructor proceeds through a unit of professional development training 10, the instructor may take a self-assessment examination to determine whether or not the training has been comprehended and integrated. When the instructor is satisfied with his or her comprehension of the training unit, the instructor then may access an on-line lesson plan development matrix 18 that guides the instructor through the creation of lesson plans. These lesson plans conform with standards applicable to that instructor and to local or national standards.

After creating the lesson plan or plans, the instructor then applies the training from the professional development training unit by integrating the concepts in that unit into the lesson plans. These integrated lesson plans 20 are used by the instructor so that the professional development concepts and strategies are included as part of the pedagogy.

The professional development training 10 units are available on-line, through videotapes or digital versatile discs (DVDs) and may be accessed throughout the school year so that the concepts may be refreshed in the minds of the instructor. At the end of some period of assessment, for example, after a quarter or semester, students are given an assessment examination, such as the ITBS, CRT, SAT, or MAT that creates student assessment data 22. This student assessment data 22 is analyzed to determine whether or not a student's scores have improved from previous assessment base-line data and whether or not that improvement data may be attributed to the training. If there is an improvement in the student assessments that can be attributed to the instructor's

training, then that training may be refreshed each year or more difficult or more complex training principles may be introduced the next year. The cycle may continue until there appears to be no added improvement resulting from the additional training. Successful training may also be communicated to other school districts so that they can take advantage of the research of other school districts. Student assessment data may not only be used for the educator's self-assessment, but also may be forwarded for administrative and teacher review 16.

In many parts of the country, so-called "high stakes testing" are used wherein the salary, advancement, or continued employment of an instructor is based on standardized student assessment. Embodiments of the present invention provide evaluation standards to be used by an administrator so that such decisions can be based upon verifiable and quantifiable criteria. The evaluation process may also be used to determine which areas of professional development training needs to be revisited by an instructor or introduced into the system. For example, if math scores are low, and other school districts has experienced success in implementing a communication skills professional development training, which seems to have improved math scores, then the administrator may place that unit into the mandatory curriculum for instructors.

It will be appreciated that the professional development training system set forth above may also be utilized for any private or public entity training, and not just for educational training. For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or similar federally mandated safety training entity may be taught using the embodiments of the present invention herein described. Specifically, instructors or trainees may be trained on-line through video/DVD capabilities of the present invention, and personal assessments may be used to determine whether or not the concepts have been comprehended. A plan may also be developed for incorporating the professional concepts

and strategies into the workflow and daily regiment for the professional. Evaluation and assessment data may then be provided an administrator or a supervisor of the trainee/professional to verify that concepts have been successfully integrated.

The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative, and not restrictive. The scope of the invention is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims rather than by the foregoing description. All changes that come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

What is claimed is: